To face the Wye

Samuel del.

Underwood Sc.

View near Bualt.

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A

TOUR

OF THE

RIVER WYE

AND

ITS VICINITY.

ENRICHED WITH

TWO ENGRAVINGS.

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TOUR

OF THE

WYE.

THERE is not any part of our country that has a ſtronger claim to the attention of the traveller, or has been more univerſally admired, than the celebrated RIVER WYE. This beautiful meandering ſtream has often been the theme of poets, and the fruitful ſubject of touriſts; ſome of whom have not heſitated to ſay, that for pictureſque beauty and rich ſcenery it is not to be equalled in this or any other country.

A modern writer of taſte has obſerved, "that while the eye of a "traveller is employed in ſurveying "the variety of ſcenes which na-"ture exhibits, his attention ſhould "be engaged in marking with ac-"curacy the manners of the inha-"bitants, through the countries "which he paſſes; that, by ſelect-"ing whatever is found excellent "among them, he may learn to "model his own conduct; by "which, profit and delight will go "hand in hand: and by repeated "change of ſcene, he will daily "lay up freſh treaſure in his own "mind, to meliorate and improve "it."

It is a circumſtance ſingular in its nature, that within a very ſmall diſtance from the well-head of the Wye, the Severn has its origin. The two ſprings are not unlike: but

but the fortune of rivers, like thoſe of individuals, owes much to the various circumſtances of ſituation and place. The Severn, oppoſed by a tract of ground that riſes to the right, ſoon leaves Plinlimmon, and purſuing its courſe north-eaſt, continues nearly in that direction until it reaches Shrewſbury. Here it meets another obſtruction, which turns it ſouth-eaſt; afterwards, having leſs impediments, it enlarges its circle from place to place, receiving many large and bountiful ſupplies of water in its courſe; until at length its eddying waves embrace their kindred element by entering the ocean as an arm of the ſea.

From the top of the mountain Plinlimmon, in Montgomeryſhire, the Wye takes its riſe: the water falls in a narrow ſtream, ſome hun-

dred yards, almoſt perpendicular, and purſues its capricious courſe through Radnorſhire, Brecknockſhire, Herefordſhire, Monmouthſhire, and Glouceſterſhire, embracing, in its courſe, a number of tributary ſtreams, until it empties itſelf into the Severn, below Chepſtow.

The length has been generally computed eighty miles; and for its various pictureſque ſcenery, it is no doubt indebted to the elevated banks of the river, and its peculiar winding courſe: circumſtances, while they change the ſcene, are perpetually placing new objects of beauty before the eye.

It may likewiſe be obſerved, that though the Wye is compoſed of ſimple parts, ſtill they are varied, and always new, chiefly owing to the road partaking of the irregularity of the coun-

country, firſt climbing the hill, and then ſinking into the valley, each change exhibiting a different character of things.

Another object of beauty is its *woods*. Wherever we may be led to traverſe nature, in purſuit of pleaſure, we never found a barren or ſolitary waſte ſtrike the mind with any peculiar effect, ſave the feelings it excited for the wretchedneſs it deplored.—How different a well-cultivated land! broken into hill and valley—take a *novice* in the ſtudy of nature into this ſcene, and you immediately diſcover its effects. By way of obſervation, it may not be improper to notice how, on a firſt view from Richmond Hill, the foot of a ſtranger is rivetted to the ſpot for many minutes. The cauſe is evident; the beautiful meander-

ing of the river Thames, the well-wooded bottom, and the chain of hills to the weſt, are objects of too much importance not to excite the feelings and intereſt the mind, by ſo grand an aſſemblage of beauty.

The *rocks* are the next point from which the Wye receives additional beauty; theſe, perpetually ſtarting through the woods, produce a grand effect. The eye is pleaſed with the rich foliage of a tree, and views the eddying ſtream with grateſulneſs; while the naked and broken rocks never fail to produce thoſe ſenſations which are inſeparable from a ſurvey of the *ruined majeſty of nature*. In one ſpot you behold them with a few ſhrubs trembling before the blaſt of heaven; in another hanging their impending forms, and ſtriking terror in the obſerver.

The

The general ornaments of the Wye, therefore, may be claſſed under four heads—the *ground*, *rocks*, *wood*, and *buildings*. In whatever point of view theſe four attracting objects may be taken, they will yield a rich harveſt to the eye of the traveller.

A few miles from Plinlimmon the country does not put on any new appearance: a chain of hills forms what may be called the diſtance, varying and irregular. The river, not broad, rolls gently over its rocky bed, until at Cumerger, a diſtance of ſix miles, it receives a large ſupply of water from the river Caſtal. On the road which leads to the *Devil's Bridge*, you have the Caſtal in full view, which forms a very pleaſing object. At Cumerger there is a wooden bridge thrown acroſs this river, the fine

ſcenery around which will have ſufficient charms to detain the traveller, if he has taſte or ſenſibility to reliſh the beauties of nature. From hence, a good road leading to Llanidlos, runs parallel with the river, and affords a pleaſant ride until you reach the village of Llangerig, whoſe clay-built cottages proclaim the wretchedneſs of its inhabitants. A little below the town, the river Darnel has its ſource, it is ſaid, from the hills of that name, and purſues its courſe into the Wye.

If any thing can compenſate for the poverty of Llangerig, it is the extreme beauty and romantic appearance of nature that ſurrounds it; together with the hills that are enriched with the ſtately oak and branching underwood, forming an inimitable picture for the pencil of the artiſt.

We

We continued our journey to the little town of Rhayader, whoſe whitewaſhed cottages had a pleaſing effect. We could not altogether applaud the mode of whitewaſhing houſes, which is a general cuſtom in Wales, on account of the effect it has upon ſtrangers not accuſtomed to look on ſuch objects.

In the neighbourhood of Rhayader there are many charming ſcenes. The bridge, forming the ſegment of a circle, conſiſts of one arch; the ſtructure is plain, and, from its elevation, has a romantic appearance, having the immenſe rocks on each ſide for its baſes.—This place formerly boaſted of a caſtle, but no remains are now to be found. Camden informs us, it was put in repair in the reign of Richard the Firſt.

The attention and civility we received from the hoſt at the *ſign of the Red Lion*, we cannot but remember with ſatisfaction.

Though not immediately connected with the ſubject of our river, we could not reſiſt the impulſe we felt to take a view of the *Devil's Bridge*, of which we had heard ſuch multiplied and extraordinary accounts in our journey: as ſuch, we departed the next day to inſpect this ſtupendous ſcene. The diſtance from our comfortable little inn was 18 miles. During our ride, the eye was frequently arreſted by the romantic beauties of this part of South Wales. For a few miles, the road is one continued aſcent, which perpetually gives new beauty to the landſcape. The ſmall town of Rhayader, and Vaga's

ſtream

ſtream winding through the fertile vale below, have a charming effect. Flocks of ſheep and herds of cattle, the wandering companions of the mountain, here browſe in numbers, with the lonely ſhepherd beſide them. The feelings of the mind, in contemplating theſe pictures of rational and animal life, move us by different ſenſations; we feel the excluſion of the former from ſocial life, while the latter creates our concern for their perilous ſituation, as one falſe ſtep would make inſtant death certain.

Purſuing the road on this ſide the old lead-mines, it becomes frightfully barren; but here you meet with a few cottages, erected for the workmen, that chaſe the gloom away.

The method of procuring the ore as found in its native element, will,

no

no doubt, be gratifying to one not accuſtomed to ſuch ſights.

The engine and other apparatus uſed in the proceſs, are characteriſed by conſiderable antiquity, and bear marks of having been conſtructed before mechanics arrived at the perfection they now have.

The ſhaft will no doubt give ſome ſurpriſe, through which the miners informed us they had perforated the mountain, and have made a ſubterraneous paſſage almoſt through the ſame.

At a ſmall diſtance from hence, the woods of Hafod burſt at once on the eye. To the right, the road leads to Aberyſtwith.

We ſtopped to take a little refreſhment at Pentre, a ſmall inn about three miles diſtant from the bridge.

Continuing the road from Cwm-

yſtwith, a chain of mountains, of great extent, but remarkably irregular, preſent themſelves; which appear as though driven by an immenſe ſtorm, gradually riſing above each other, with increaſing grandeur, till they appear to touch the clouds.

We took up our abode at the Hafod Arms, a neat comfortable inn, which ſtands in front of the Rhyddol. Fancy may here buſy herſelf with what nature preſents to the eye, in a pleaſing manner.—The famous bridge is but a very ſhort ſpace from the inn; but, being emboſomed in a thicket, it is probable many a ſtranger has paſſed over it, inſenſible of what the curious have ſought after with ſo much avidity. The bridge conſiſts of two arches, thrown over each other: one has great marks of antiquity; and, from that circumſtance, we were

were informed the common people attribute it to the *devil*'s invention. The chaſm it covers is about 25 feet wide; and, from ancient records, it is ſuppoſed was built about the year 1075. In the reign of Richard I. during the time of the pious cruſades of our anceſtors, tradition informs us, that Baldwin, the Biſhop of Cambray, paſſed over it in 1188. The preſent fabric, built over the ancient one, was completed in 1753. The breadth of the old bridge was about 25 feet, the latter near 30. The chaſm that yawns under theſe arches is ſo much covered with wood, that the eye can but have a partial view of the abyſs below; in order therefore to obtain a better one of the vaſt torrent that ruſhes through it, we croſſed the bridge to the right, and ſoon came to the baſe of the rocks on the eaſt ſide of the arch. Here, indeed,

ima-

imagination may pauſe, and fill up all that language cannot deſcribe. The ſtupendous height which the bridge beſtrides, of more than 100 feet above the obſerver, the gloomy wood, which gives a deep ſolitude to the ſcene—the troubled torrent at his feet, ſtruggling through oppoſing rocks with a tremendous roar, fill the mind with mingled ſenſations of fear and delight.

Having for ſome time gratified the eye with this ſurpriſing ſcene, we purſued a winding path that leads to the ſublime cataracts weſt of the bridge. The Mynach here, from its unconfined courſe through broken rocks, burſts upon the eye with wildneſs and agitation. The firſt is a fall of more than 20 feet, whence it ruſhes, with equal force, to a ſecond leap of 60 feet: a third is attempted, but decreaſes about 20 feet; and here it falls

amongſt

amongſt the ragged rocks, which continually acting as a barrier to its repoſe, give it a tenfold rage; and ruſhing, with immenſe velocity, over projecting ſtones, tumbles with a headlong deſcent of 100 feet and upwards—after which it purſues its courſe through a ſmall channel, and mixes with the waters of the Rhyddol. We could long have contemplated this ſcene as worthy of our detention, had not a gathering ſtorm called to our recollection the comforts of our little inn.

The Rhyddol here is encircled with vaſt hills, ſome of which are prettily clothed with wood, others frightfully naked and barren.

From the brink of the river (though not eaſy of acceſs) you are well repaid by a ſcene enchanting as beautiful.

Being now in the neighbourhood of the ſylvan *Hafod*, we were anxi-

anxious to change the awful and ſublime for the leſs terrific, and repoſe ourſelves on fairy ground—for, taking it in all points of view, the charming reſidence of T. Johnes, Eſq. certainly may be ſtyled the *Paradiſe* of *Wales*; and, fearing to do it all the juſtice it deſerves, we forbear intruding our own ſentiments, but will take the liberty of offering a deſcription from the elegant pen of Mr. Cumberland.—It may be neceſſary to acquaint the reader, that by the liberal politeneſs of T. Johnes, Eſq. tickets are left at the Hafod Arms and Devil's Bridge, for gaining admiſſion to his elegant manſion, grounds, &c. and which never fail of ſecuring an eaſy acceſs.

"That which renders the reſi-
"dence of Hafod the moſt remark-
"able is, that, with all its natural
"beau-

" beauties, it is close in the vicinity " of mountainous forests, of a cha- " racter totally different from its " own; of a character, I may add, " totally unlike any thing I ever " before beheld, and which many " people think superior to any place " in Wales.

" One excursion to this place will " not suffice common observers, nor " indeed many to the lovers of the " grand sports of nature; and, al- " though the intended paths are not " as yet sketched out, I shall re- " commend to those who can bear " the fatigue of climbing among " dingles—who, in search of beau- " ties, are capable of descending " from the 'hilly crofts, that brow " the bottomed glades, down to the " dark sequestered rocks below'— " to enter upon the Fynach stream, " about four miles from Hafod, and

" skirt

" ſkirt it, as well as they can, down
" to the Devil's Bridge.

" I can fairly promiſe them they
" will often find themſelves in
" 'umbrageous grots and caves of
" cool receſs, over which the ivy
" creeps;' behold the murmuring
" water-falls down the ſloped 'dell
" diſperſed,' or 'in a glaſſy pool
" unite their ſtreams;' ſee 'criſped
" brooks, with mazy error, under
" pendant ſhade, offering their
" glaſſy, cool, tranſlucent waves,
" 'midſt grots and caverns, ſhagged
" with horrid ſhade'."

The different walks through the woods extend ſix or ſeven miles, and exhibit a variety of pictureſque ſcenery which alternately charm and ſurpriſe.

" Hafod is a place in itſelf ſo pre-
" eminently beautiful, that it highly
" merits a particular deſcription.

" It

" It ſtands ſurrounded with ſo many " noble ſcenes, diverſified with ele- " gance as well as with grandeur; " the country, on the approach to it, " is ſo very wild and uncommon, " and the place itſelf is now ſo em- " belliſhed by art, that it will be " difficult, I believe, to point out a " ſpot that can be put in competi- " tion with it, conſidered either as " the object of the painter's eye, " the poet's mind, or as a deſirable " reſidence for thoſe who, admirers " of the beautiful wildneſs of na- " ture, love alſo to inhale the pure " air of aſpiring mountains.

" To all theſe charms, it has a " capacious ſtone manſion, executed " in the pleaſing, becauſe appropri- " ate, ſtyle of Gothic architecture, " ſituated on the ſide of a choſen, " ſheltered dingle, embowered with " trees, which riſe from a lawn of

" the

" the gentleſt declivity, that ſhelves
" in graceful hollows to the ſtream
" below.

" From the portico, it commands
" a woody, narrow, winding vale;
" the undulating forms of whoſe
" aſcending ſhaggy ſides, are richly
" clothed with various foliage,
" broken with ſilvery water-falls,
" and crowned with climbing ſheep-
" walks, reaching to the clouds.

" Within the building, whoſe
" decorations, though rich, are
" pure and ſimple, we find a maſs
" of rare and valuable literature,
" whoſe pages here ſeem doubly
" precious, where meditation finds
" ſcope to range unmoleſted.

" In a word, ſo many are the de-
" lights afforded by the ſcenery of
" this place and its vicinity, to a
" mind imbued with any taſte, that
" the impreſſion on mine was in-

" creaſed

" creaſed after an interval of ten
" years from the firſt viſit, employ-
" ed chiefly in travelling among the
" Alps, the Apennines, the Sabine
" Hills, and the Tyrolleſe; along
" the ſhores of the Adriatic, over
" the Glaciers of Switzerland, and
" up the Rhine; where, though
" in ſearch of beauty, I never
" ſaw any thing ſo fine—never ſo
" many pictures concentred in one
" ſpot.

" Wales, and its borders, both
" north and ſouth, abound, at inter-
" vals, with fine things: Piercefield
" has grounds of great magnificence,
" and wonderfully pictureſque beau-
" ty. Downton Caſtle has a deli-
" cious woody vale, moſt taſtefully
" managed: Llangollen is bril-
" liant—the banks of the Conway
" ſavagely grand—Barmouth ro-
" mantically rural. The great Piſ-

" till

" till Rhayader is horribly wild—
" Rhayader Wennol gay, and glo-
" rioufly irregular; each of which
" merits a ſtudied deſcription.

" But at Hafod, and its neigh-
" bourhood, I find the effects of
" all in one circle. I ſee the ' ſweet-
" eſt interchange of hill and valley,
" rivers, woods, and plains, and
" falls, with foreſts crowned, rocks,
" dens, and caves;' inſomuch, that
" it requires little enthuſiaſm there
" to feel forcibly with Milton,
" that

" All things that be, ſend up from earth's great altar
Silent praiſe!"

The taſteful and liberal proprietor of this beautiful ſpot has, with the avail of modern improvements, contrived a communication from his library to his conſervatory, which has an effect to the eye the moſt ſerene and ſoothing that can be view-

ed. The library, a grand and capacious room, fitted up with every thing that is elegant and uſeful, ſtrikes you, on your entrance, with ſenſations of the happineſs it is capable of imparting within itſelf. At the further end is the large glaſs door, opening into the conſervatory, wherein is collected a variety of rare and beautiful plants, with a fountain playing in the centre.

The botaniſt here would find an ample field for the gratification of the mind; as well as the ſtudious, for all that literature is capable of imparting.

To thoſe who are deſirous of paying a viſit to the ruins of Strata Florida Abbey, it ſtands about ten miles from Hafod, ſcreened by friendly woods and lofty mountains, with the river Tivy winding beneath.

Having

Having highly gratified ourſelves with what Mr. Cumberland has deſcribed, by varying the road back, and leaving Hafod to the left, we ſoon came to our little inn at Pentré, from whence we purſued our old route back to Rhayader.

The imagination can form but a faint idea of the horrors of a thunder-ſtorm in theſe wild and romantic places. In the courſe of our journey we were witneſs to two or three. The thunder rolls with an awful rumbling over the head, while the vales and the mountains give back the tremendous ſounds with double force. The cracks and burſts it makes were diſtinguiſhed from any we had before heard in our own neighbourhood. We had the curioſity to mark its progreſs, after the firſt flaſh of lightning, to its ceſſation, which, before the atmo-

ſphere became calm and tranquil, rather exceeded one minute and thirty-one ſeconds.

The river here diſplays much impetuoſity, foaming over its adamantine bed, and forming a caſcade of ſeveral feet, almoſt immediately under the bridge: the foot-path winds its margin through the meadows, leaving the turnpike road to the right.

Kingſton, in this neighbourhood, deſerves particular attention from the traveller. The memorable remnants of antiquity to be ſeen in its diſtrict naturally call back thoſe days in which *Caractacus* flouriſhed, whoſe camp is ſtill in high preſervation on the hills towards Chum. Cæſar's may alſo be traced on an eminence beſide the valley. Here too the immenſe dyke of Offa, king of the Mercians in the eighth cen-

century, paſſes by Kingſton, taking a ſlant direction, from the river Dee, acroſs the kingdom, to Weymouth.

Brampton Bryan, the ancient ſeat of the Oxford family, ſtands in this valley. Its charming woods, that once afforded ſhade and ſhelter, are now no more: the huſbandman having laid his axe to the root, it preſents a naked and comfortleſs waſte to the eye.

At the diſtance of a few miles from hence, both the river Eland and brook Clanven give another ſupply of water to our river.—From hence we journeyed on towards Bualt. A little before we reached the town, the ſcenery was peculiarly inviting, on which account it did not fail to detain us.

Bualt is a ſmall town, ſurrounded with a pleaſant plain: it had for-

merly a caſtle, of which there are now no remains.

It was in this neighbourhood that the laſt reigning Prince of Wales, *Llewellyn*, was ſlain, in a wood, after a deſperate battle between the Welſh and Engliſh forces.

Bualt has to boaſt of ſome buſtle, though it puts on no parade of ſelf-importance. A market-day here may be deemed London in miniature, from the hurry of its buſy people.

The juſt and laudable zeal of induſtry has that in its nature, from the benefit it diffuſes over a ſtate, as to merit the applauſe of every obſerver. As ſuch, it was our united wiſh that the buſy multitude of Bualt and its neighbourhood might reap the perſonal benefit of their ſeveral labours.

About

Samuel del.t

Underwood fc.

Bualt Bridge.

About the diſtance of a mile from Bualt the river Irvon winds its courſe, and embraces the Wye. The Irvon, compared with other neighbouring rivers, is broad; it has its origin from the hills in the county of Brecknock.

A new ſtone bridge is now erecting over it, near to the old one. It has ſix elliptical arches; and upon the whole, produces a grand effect. On a hill, near adjoining to this place, is the reſidence of D. Thomas, Eſq. The houſe is a handſome ſtone building, and commands a noble proſpect towards the ſouth, as well as the meandering courſe of the Wye and Irvon. It was here we contemplated the ſolitary life of the ſhepherd.

The fanciful deſcriptions and profuſe eulogies which the poets have beſtowed on the ancient paſ-

toral life, might incline us very highly to eſtimate a ſtate that is repreſented as replete with bleſſings, almoſt unallayed with afflictions, and as compriſing the happieſt of mankind; but how unlike is the picture of the unenlightened ſhepherds of our own times and country! Secluded from the world, bred up in ignorance, and without a reſource to fill up the many vacant hours, how tediouſly muſt they paſs away; and how undeſirable ſeems the lot of this portion of mankind, doomed from the days of their youth to the ſole employment of tending flocks, and fated to traverſe, during life, bleak and dreary mountains, rarely trodden by the foot of man, and where the ſolitary ſhepherd is ſeldom greeted by a human voice!

The

The road from Bualt to the Hay is down a beautiful valley, which partaking of the advantage of a high bank, every beauty of the enchanting diſtrict preſented itſelf to the eye. The river rolls on with majeſty and grandeur, and often diſports itſelf in broad curves, waſhing with white foam the verdant banks that bloom beſide it.

Not far diſtant from hence, we had a view of Llangoed.—Surrounded with its majeſty of woods, it is a very extenſive domain, and worthy the reſidence of any perſon; but why it ſhould be deſerted by its former maſter, we know not. However, certain it is, it has paſſed into the hands of a ſtranger.

The ſmall village of Clyro it may be neceſſary to notice, not from any peculiar beauty it poſſeſſes, but for

the highly intereſting view you have of the Wye from a ſmall temple in the upper part of the garden of the parſonage-houſe. In the foreſt of Clyro, from a ſmall hill, the point of proſpect, which is marked by a ſingle tree, commands a wonderful aſſemblage of beauty.

Continuing our route, we had a view of the elegant ſeat of Mr. Edwards, and ſoon reached the ſmall village of Swains. The mountains here gradually recede, and the face of the country aſſumes a new character. Glaſsbury bridge, built by the late Mr. Edwards, we admired: it conſiſts of ſeveral arches, and has an agreeable light appearance. Mr. Edwards was the celebrated architect of Pont-y-Pridd, an account of which will be found in page 159 of the Welſh Tours.

About

About four miles from the Hay ſtands Meaſlough, the ancient reſidence of the Howarths. The ſituation has been deemed not inferior to any in Wales.

The Hay is happily ſituated on a hill. It was formerly a Roman ſtation, and was conſidered as a place of great ſtrength, being defended by a ſtrong caſtle, until Owen Glyndwr laid it in aſhes.

Miſs Seward, in her celebrated poem of Llangollen Vale, ſpeaks in honour of this hero as follows:

" Luxuriant vale, thy country's early boaſt,
" What time great GLENDOUR gave thy ſcenes to fame;
" Taught the proud numbers of the Engliſh hoſt,
" How vain their vaunted force, when Freedom's flame
" Fir'd him to brave the myriads he abhorr'd,
" Wing'd his unerring ſhaft, and edg'd his victor ſword."

At Mackynelth he exerciſed the firſt acts of his royalty, when he accepted the crown of Wales A. D. 1402. At this place he aſſembled a parliament. The houſe is ſhown to this day, divided in ſmall tenements, and is well worth a viſit from the curious.

The preſent caſtle is near the centre of the town. The creeping ivy, the general companion of fallen ruins, faſtens around its remains, producing a ſtriking effect on viewing this venerable ruin.

The ancient caſtle is converted into a dwelling-houſe, belonging to the Wellington family.

The church ſtands on the ſide of the river, but has nothing particular to recommend it. At a ſmall diſtance from the bridge, you have a ſcene peculiarly enriched by meadows, corn-fields, and ſtately woods.

The

The black mountains give an excellent back ground to the ſcenery, and when illuminated by the ſun, cannot fail of giving force to every object and feeling to every nerve.

The Wye, on quitting this place, receives a great body of water from the Dulas river, after which it aſſumes a bolder confidence and more rapid current.

About the diſtance of ſeven miles from the Hay, on the road to Abergavenny, ſtand the ruins of Llantony Priory. Dugdale informs us, in his Monaſticon, that it was a place richly adorned with wood.—How great would be the contraſt, could the ſearching eye of our celebrated hiſtorian view it now!—Its tall woods are no more, and the ruin is wholly naked and deſolate.

The following account of this

once celebrated place is given by Giraldus:

"In the deep vale of Ewyas "ſtands, encircled with an amphi- "theatre of immenſe mountains, "the church of St. John: it is co- "vered with lead, and not inele- "gantly built, with an arched roof "of ſtone. This ſpot is juſtly "ſuited for religious exerciſes, and "the moſt proper for canonical diſ- "cipline of any other monaſtery in "the Britiſh iſland.

"The church was firſt founded, "ſolitary and remote from all "worldly noiſe, by two hermits, "to the honour of a monaſtic life, "and is ſituated on the river Hod- "ney, which runs through the "length of the vale.

"The cloiſtered monks may "view, from within their walls,

"the

" the mountains rising above them,
" and almoſt touching heaven with
" their exalted ſummits, and a-
" bounding with deer feeding aloft,
" at the extremity of the lofty ho-
" rizon.

" The ſun is never viſible to this
" gloomy receſs, till between the
" afternoon hours of one and three;
" and even then is rarely ſeen, ex-
" cept in the cleareſt ſeaſon."

The foregoing picture from Giraldus is maſterly drawn; and, though touched with a poetical pencil, is very accurate. The church is really encircled with mountains, for the opening through them to the vale is not viſible from the cloiſter.

The lower parts of the mountains, and the valley itſelf, are enriched with meadows and corn-

fields,

fields, and are now and then enlivened with a little wood.

The abbey church was built in the form of a croſs, and is ſtill a noble object; it was founded, according to Speed, in the year 1137, and is a regular compoſition of Norman architecture, mixed with Gothic. It may be called regular, becauſe all the under ſtructure is Gothic, and the upper Norman, the arches below being all pointed, and thoſe above circular; and becauſe it was built upon one entire plan, and manifeſtly at one and the ſame time.

The whole nave, the roof excepted, remains from eaſt to weſt, and is, by my meaſurement, two hundred and twelve feet in length, and twenty-ſeven feet four inches in breadth; the aiſles are no more than eight feet eight inches broad. The ſtone diagonal vault, over the body of

of the church, ſprang from ſmall cluſtered flying pillars; theſe are ſtill ſeen projecting from the walls, between the Gothic arches of the nave.

Two ſides of the high tower are ſtill extant, which riſe from nearly the centre of the church.

The whole ſtructure is faced with a durable and well-worked ſtone, and the ruins offer as romantic a view as any in the tour.

Juſt above the little pariſh of Llandewi, four miles from Llantony, is a remarkable mountain, the ſides of which have, at different times, been broken from it, and now lie in immenſe fragments underneath, having left a long perpendicular precipice more than 100 feet high.

We could learn no particulars about theſe ſeparations of the rock, though,

though, from the apparent freſhneſs of ſome of the fallen pieces, we did not conceive the laſt to be very ancient.

Several ſtupendous fiſſures and chaſms appear on and about the mountain of Skirid vawr, the foot of which we paſſed in our morning's ride. Theſe were occaſioned by the ſame cauſe as the ſeparation of the rock near Llandewi, which in all probability proceeded from its foundation being weakened or deſtroyed by the frequent burſtings of the ſprings below; when the ſinking or diviſion of the part of the rock would naturally follow from its great impending weight.

Whatever truth may be in our conjecture, the inhabitants of Abergavenny attribute the rents of Skirrid vawr to a different cauſe, and endeavoured to convince us that they

they were the miraculous effects of the convulſions of nature on the day of the crucifixion.

At a diſtance of little more than two miles from the Hay is Clifford Caſtle. Camden records it to have been built by Fitzoſborn, Earl of Hereford, from whom deſcended the earls of Cumberland. Tradition informs us, that at this place the celebrated Roſamond ſpent the early part of her life. The caſtle is an object worthy the notice of the touriſt, if it be only to ſketch its leſſer attractions in the fallen ruins. Paſſing through ſeveral villages, we ſoon obtained a charming proſpect of the Merebich hills, whoſe noble ſwells riſe full in front, continuing for ſome time before the eye as a conſiderable object.

Whitney we remarked as a pleaſant village. Its time-worn bridge

now

now only exhibits a maſs of ruins.

Bradwardine is ſituated on the bank of the river: the ruins of the caſtle ſtand in full view, but little remains to attract notice, ſave the ſcenery around the place, which has much to intereſt the eye.

About eight miles from Hereford, and very little out of the road, ſtands Foxley: the charming wood that ſurrounds it, as well as its grounds, are greatly worthy of attention.

A pleaſing ride of about two miles, through a wood of fine young oaks, leads to the point of a hill called *Lady Lift*, where the view cannot fail to ſtrike with admiration and delight: it commands a north-eaſt proſpect of Herefordſhire, the Clee hills in Shropſhire, the Malvern hills in Worceſterſhire,

ſhire, and Brecon and Radnorſhire mountains. The direct road to Kingſton is under this hill.

Paſſing from hence to Hereford, a number of charming villas preſent themſelves; among theſe we particularly diſtinguiſhed Belmont, the views from which in every direction, muſt irreſiſtibly attract notice. Nature and art having happily combined, here make a free-will offering to the ſtranger of their lovelineſs and charms.

As ſeveral hiſtories of Hereford are extant, it is foreign to our intention to inveſtigate its antiquities: nevertheleſs, as it has been our cuſtom hitherto to obſerve particular objects, we wiſh to notice thoſe that appear to us worthy of the attention of the ſtranger. This ancient city, we are informed by the eminent hiſtorian Camden, was

founded in 1079, in the reign of Henry I. The preſent venerable church has undergone many changes, and at different periods has been much beautified by its ſeveral biſhops. The columns are maſſive and ponderous, and exhibit all the grandeur of ancient architecture. There are likewiſe ſome monuments of its biſhops ſtill remaining, and others not unworthy of notice, which ſtand as beacons to the paſſing ſtranger, to point out his mortality. From the accident which happened in 1794, when the weſt tower of the church, with part of the body, unfortunately fell down, the cathedral has undergone a thorough repair, at the expenſe of upwards of 10,000*l.*

The vicars' college ſtands at a little diſtance from the cathedral, and commands a fine view of the

Wye,

Wye, as well as its fertile vales and meandering ſtream.

The caſtle has been a capital fortreſs. Leland, in his Itinerary ſays, "it was one of the faireſt, "largeſt, and grandeſt in England." The place on which it ſtood is now called Caſtle Green, from which is a good view of the ſurrounding country.

The bridge, conſiſting of eight arches, is of ſtone, and carries with it proofs of great antiquity. Some hiſtorians have ſuppoſed it to be erected ſoon after the conqueſt.

The Wye here winds its placid ſtream round a point of land for two miles, until it is almoſt brought to touch the town. The face of the country is in a high ſtate of cultivation; and the cattle which graze in its meadows are objects that add beauty to the ſcene. We paſſed the pic-

picturesque village of Mordiford, and soon came in view of Holme Lacy, a mansion belonging to the Duke of Norfolk. The building, compared with many in this country, has nothing to captivate, except possessing a fine collection of family portraits.

King's Caple, a small village, is very pleasantly situated amidst a charming assemblage of woods, a little below which is Harewood, the ancient residence of —— Hoskins, Esq.

We continued our route to Selleck, which afforded us a capital view of Ross, on the approach to which the venerable trees called Ash-wood, successfully clothe the banks of the Wye.

Ross stands high, and commands many delightful views: the church-yard has always been the most admired;

mired; it conſiſts of a partial but rich proſpect of the Wye, and of a vaſt extent of country beyond it, which, being broken into many parts, is marked by no characteriſtic objects. The pleaſure-boats that are conſtantly employed between here and Chepſtow give life and beauty to the town.

Roſs once boaſted of a caſtle, which is reported to have been demoliſhed in the civil wars.

To paſs over the benevolent Man of Roſs, John Kyrle, would be to ſlight thoſe virtues which any part of our countrymen might be proud to poſſeſs. This town owes much of its improvements to his benevolent exertions. The admirable poet* who ſung ſo well in his praiſe has informed us he poſſeſſed but 500*l.* a year, and yet he appears to have

* Pope.

enjoyed every happineſs himſelf, as well as to have diffuſed it to others. He was ſheriff for the county 1683, and died 1724. It is ſingular to remark, that there was no monument raiſed to the memory of this exemplary character until 1776, a period of 52 years.

From Roſs, the banks of the Wye are low, and the river here becomes tame. Croſſing the bridge, we reached Wilton Caſtle, which appears on the margin, ſhrouded with a few trees. The caſtle formerly covered a vaſt extent of ground, now in part converted into a garden.

Camden ſays, that King John gave Wilton, with the caſtle, to H. Longſchamp, from whom it deſcended to Lord Grey de Wilton.

At the diſtance of a mile from Wilton, it may be worth the traveller's

ler's attention to aſcend the hill leading to Monmouth, called Pencreek, where nature has been profuſe of her gifts; the views of which cannot fail to charm, and may be conſidered as the moſt ſublime the river affords. Deſcending from this eminence, little attracted our attention except the doubling of the ſeveral capes, and the woody banks riſing one beyond another, appearing and vaniſhing by turns, until we came to Goodrich Caſtle, which is conſidered the ſecond grand object of the river, and is truly pictureſque. It has been ſaid, that "nature is "always great in deſign:" in this place, ſhe may be ſaid to colour from the harmony of the whole. We aſcended the hill, to contemplate the ſcene, and ſurvey the ravages of time. The creeping ivy, as though it were the ſorrowing com-

panion of decayed fabrics, had here entwined itſelf round the embattled tower. Hiſtory appears ſilent with regard to the period when this caſtle was built; but we learn, ſo early as the reign of King John, that the Earl of Pembroke had a grant of it from that monarch. It has four large round towers; the windows are arched in the Saxon ſtyle. Here was once a drawbridge, reſembling that of Beeſton Caſtle, in Cheſhire, intended, no doubt, as a place of ſafety for its guard.

As the Wye here makes one of its boldeſt ſweeps, you are carried almoſt round the caſtle, which you ſurvey in a variety of forms, and contemplate both its own dignity and the dignity of its ſituation.

A little below the caſtle is Goodrich Priory: a few Gothic windows are ſtill remaining, to mark the ſpot of

of penitence and prayer. Hiſtory records it to have been endowed by Edward the Fourth, A.D. 1481.

From the village of Goodrich we had an extenſive view of the foreſt of Dean, alſo of Rure Dean church, which is an object of grandeur.

Purſuing our courſe down the river, the ſeat of —— Vaughan, Eſq. of Courtfield, attracted our attention, and appeared a lively object in the road. For ſome diſtance, both ſides of the river continue ſteep and beautiful. Nature here may be ſaid to characterize her own ſcenes, and cheriſh her own beauties, as we cannot but admire how ſhe adorns both concave and convex forms.

From hence we ſoon approached Ladbroke Wharf, where a conſiderable commerce of coal is carried

on to Hereford, Roſs, and its neighbourhood. Here appeared life and buſtle. The ſmall veſſels which lie againſt the wharf are ready to receive their burden; all hands are buſy, and every mind occupied with its own portion of labour. Behind the wharf hangs a rich wood, forming a back ground to the whole. By a quick bend of the river, your eye immediately meets the pictureſque town of Welſh Bickner, which, with its plantations and ſtately woods, forms a noble and majeſtic ſcene. We next approached Cold Well: the front appears as a woody hill, occaſionally varying as the objects riſe or recede before the eye.

Here we left the barge to its navigators, and climbed the majeſtic rocks, to enjoy the ſcenery; and though the taſk was arduous, it well re-

repaid us for the toil. In paſſing theſe rocks to the New Weir, a more ſublime ſcenery cannot be conceived; wild thyme and various mountain productions ſcent the gale, and yield a rich fragrance to the ſmell: it is alſo to be noticed that this paſs is little more than one mile to the New Weir, though by water it is three. The river here is wider than uſual, and takes a ſweep round a prodigious rock.

On the oppoſite ſide of the river are the vaſt iron forges, which are well worth viſiting: the hammers that beat and ſhape the fiery maſs, though the ſound may be grating to the ear of ſenſibility, ſtill be it remembered how uſeful are its purpoſes, and how valuable is every part of *manual labour* that tends to produce the comforts and conveniences of life.

Mr. Tanner's iron works at Monmouth are particularly deſerving of notice; and, from the very obliging diſpoſition of the owner, much information may be obtained.

The ore, we were informed, was principally ſupplied from Lancaſhire, and ſmelted by the aid of great bellows, worked by water. The genuine metal is ſeparated from the droſs by the vaſt heat of the furnace. Different forges are variouſly and curiouſly conſtructed for the purpoſe of forming the metal to every ſize, from the ponderous pig to the thin wove extended wire.

Whitechurch ſtands in the centre of a vale, the hills beyond which being in part covered with detached ſtones, from the upper part of the rocks, give a ſingular effect to the ſcene: one pointed fragment in particular riſing above

above its kindred rocks, produces a fantaſtic appearance; the eye being directed ſolely to the view of thoſe wild pictures of nature, cannot but call forth all the emotions of terror and delight.

A great maſter in landſcape might here ſay to himſelf—"Soul, take "thy fill. Here is nothing, how-"ever ſmall or great, that thou mayſt "not feaſt on with rapture: why "then roam into diſtant countries, "in purſuit of what cannot give "thee more ſubſtantial pleaſure or "delight? Here thou beholdeſt the "works of thy Creator, diſfigured "by no ingenuity, nor tortured by "pampered taſte: nature, pure na-"ture, ſhines in all her works, "blending, in the happieſt manner, "the gay with the grand, and the "ſimple with the ſublime!"

The river here makes a ſudden fall, but of no conſiderable height, ſtill ſufficient to challenge the name of a caſcade: the water, through the whole courſe we had gone, kept a ſolemn and ſteady pace, while the objects around moved as it were in uniſon with it: every rock which overſhadowed the bright ſtream was tranquil and majeſtic; but here the rapidity of the water, with the more than uſual noiſe it produced, impreſſed a new face on the ſcene; by us it appeared to be uproar and agitation, while every rock, paſſing the bounds we had before noticed, ſtared with terror and wildneſs.—The barges here require more than common toil to tow them up the river. A little below New Weir the ſcenery of the river was cloſed by the Doward hills. Camden has

ſaid,

ſaid, that the bones of gigantic perſons were found here interred. They who may be courageous enough to climb them, would, no doubt, be repaid by all that could captivate the eye in ſcenery.

Adjoining the wood, near the extremity of the hill, is a cavern, called King Arthur's Hall.

A little before we reached Monmouth, we were ſtruck with the pleaſing ſituation of Hadnock Houſe, which ſtands beſide the foreſt of Dean. From hence we were gratified with a view of Monmouth, which we ſoon approached. The caſtle, which was formerly the palace of a king, and the birth-place of a great prince, Henry the Fifth, has now few attractions to detain the traveller. When we contemplate the picture of time, how little is there to be proud of, when we

are told by a celebrated touriſt, "that this ſaid palace is now con-"verted into a yard for *fatting* "*ducks!*" Hiſtory records, that in this caſtle, Edward the Second, after he had been made priſoner by his Queen Iſabella, was for a time confined, A. D. 1326. We alſo further learn, that the celebrated hiſtorian Jeffery of Monmouth was born and educated here. It had a Benedictine monaſtery, or convent of monks, founded 1240. Jeffery was made archdeacon of Monmouth 1251, and afterwards biſhop of St. Aſaph.

The gaol, compared with many, has great advantages, being built on a lofty, healthy ſpot: it caſts a look of terror over the country, and we flattered ourſelves that was its worſt conſequence. From this ſpot we had a good view of the town, and the

the adjacent country. For more particulars of this place, ſee page 96 of the Welſh Tours.

As we departed from Monmouth, the banks of the river, on the left, were rather low; but we had not proceeded far when they became ſteep and woody, varying their ſhapes as uſual. In the neighbourhood of St. Breival's Caſtle are ſome beautiful views, but the caſtle is at too great a diſtance to form a ſtriking object from the river.

Oppoſite to Monmouth you have a view of the Kemmin rocks. The country here is particularly rich in ſoil, as well as other gifts of nature.

We could not reſiſt paying a viſit to ſee the noble remains of Ragland Caſtle, a diſtance of about ſix miles from Monmouth. On the road, we were greatly delighted with the rich

rich cultivation of the country.—Ragland ſeems to ſtand in a vale; but, as you approach it, aſſumes an elevated ſtation. This noble ruin has two areas within the ditch, into each of which you enter by a lofty gateway: the firſt area contains the kitchen and offices; the grand hall, or banquetting room, forms the ſcreen between the two; the muſic gallery may alſo be traced, which divides the hall from the parlour. On viewing the hall, &c. the mind is naturally filled with images of former magnificence and grandeur; the feſtivity of whoſe board is paſſed into forgetfulneſs, like the worthy inhabitants of this once devoted ſpot. How well has the poet obſerved—

Vain is the blaze of wealth, the pomp of power!
Lo, here attendant on the ſhadowy hour.

The

The citadel is a large octagonal tower, three ſides of which are ſtill remaining: the tower is encircled by a moat, and was formerly joined to the caſtle by a drawbridge.

Ragland might once, with great juſtice, be ſtyled the *court* of the princes of this country; and that at a period not very remote. The youths of the diſtinguiſhed families of Wales may be ſaid to have received the laſt poliſh of manners within its walls. The ſplendour it exhibited was the juſt admiration and boaſt of its devoted countrymen, and might fairly challenge our beſt modern times. Whence or wherefore it is left deſolate and forſaken by its noble owners, muſt be matter of mournful concern; as a continuance of its former dignity and hoſpitality would doubtleſs add much comfort and happi-

neſs

neſs to a certain claſs of people, who are only left to contemplate the ruin which time diſplays, or reflect on the hours which, alas! cannot be called back.

See a more minute account of this place in page 89 of the Welſh Tours.

A little before you reach St. Breival's, the Wye receives a new ſupply from a little ſtream called Whitebrook.

St. Breival's caſtle hiſtory records to have been built by the Earl of Hereford, in the reign of Henry I. The Earl of Berkeley is the preſent conſtable, and the Duke of Beaufort (by whom this ancient ſtructure is kept in repair) the lord of the manor.

Cultivation here, arrayed in her milder forms, cannot fail of giving pleaſure to the eye and gratification to the mind.

At a ſmall diſtance from Big Weir is the ſeat of General Rooke, well deſerving attention: it commands a charming view of the river, and other intereſting objects, which, from induſtry and commerce, is conſtantly preſented to the eye; while, at the ſame time, it imparts this uſeful leſſon—that only from multiplied ſcenes of active life ſprings the true ſource of our happineſs.

From hence we departed, to viſit the noble remains of Tintern Abbey, which, to court the favourable impulſe of meditation, is ſequeſtered in a dale.

A banquet this, where men and angels meet,
Eat the ſame manna, mingle earth and heaven.
YOUNG.

It occupies a ſmall eminence, ſcreened on all ſides by its own friendly

friendly rocks and woods, through which the river winds its courſe: the hills, cloſing on its entrance and its exit, not common to other places, leave no room for the inclement blaſts to enter.—The abbey was founded 1131, by Walter de Clare. It is an elegant ſpecimen of the chaſte Gothic, conſtructed on one plan and in one ſtyle, exhibiting another inſtance of the diſcernment of our anceſtors in their ſelection of reſidences favourable to tranquillity and comfort, as well as of their choice of a ſituation abounding in every beautiful variety of ſcenery. William the Conqueror had given to Oſbert the great grandfather of Walter, the manors of Wolleſton and Fadenham, and all that he could obtain in conqueſt from the Welſh.

The

The ſite of Tintern Abbey was poſſibly the reſult of one of the ravages of Oſbert.

Walter, the founder, died without iſſue, and was ſucceeded by his brother Gilbert Strongbowe, Earl of Pembroke, whoſe grandſon, Robert Strongbowe, conquered Leinſter in Ireland. This afterwards came, by marriage, to the family of the Earl of Norfolk and Suffolk, Hugh Bigod marrying Maud the eldeſt of the female heirs of Strongbowe.

At the time of the diſſolution here were thirteen religious. Henry the Eighth granted the ſite of this to Henry Earl of Worceſter, through whom it has deſcended to the preſent Beaufort family.

The rich weſt window of this monaſtery is one of the fineſt ſpecimens and remains of Gothic architecture

tecture in the kingdom, and is ſtill entire and perfect: it is perhaps rather too broad for its height; and, according to modern taſte, may be deemed not quite in proportion. But the grand and ſublime of former days was not under the control of imaginary rules; and the loftineſs of the roof, with the general contour of the building, might have created beauties and perfections of which the ravages of time have deprived us of the means of judging.

The exquiſite execution which is ſtill apparent in ſome of the fragments of the once ſculptured roof and its other decorations, is calculated in ſeveral inſtances to excite the emulation of the firſt artiſts of the age we live in.

The woody mountains with which the

the abbey is encircled and o'erſhadowed make it highly favourable for contemplation.

Come, penſive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, ſtedfaſt, and demure—&c.
But firſt and chiefeſt with thee bring
Him that yon ſoars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The cherub Contemplation!

MILTON—*Il Penſeroſo.*

Perhaps a more pleaſing retreat cannot well be conceived: here is every thing combined by nature, in a ſmall compaſs, that can captivate the eye or lead devotion to the altar of its God.

Oh, virtue! thou gem of heaven, if thou regard thy inward happineſs and peace, flee not this ſequeſtered vale for the bubble of the world, though its gaudy tints invite: remember it has nothing like

like thy hopes can ſhelter it in its hours of ſolitude and reflection.

There let *her* ſtrike with momentary ray,
As tapers ſhine their little lives away;
There let her practiſe from herſelf to ſteal,
And look the happineſs ſhe does not feel.

. . . . . .

Be *thine* to meditate an humbler flight,
When morning fills the fields with roſy light;
Be thine to blend, nor thine a vulgar aim,
Repoſe with dignity—with quiet, fame.

ROGERS.

No part of the ruins is ſeen from the river, except the abbey church. To ſee the whole ſtructure to the greateſt advantage, you muſt take your ſtand near the road. Time, the great maſter architect, has blunted the ſharp edges of rule and compaſs, and the nice diſtinction of line and figure remain no more to invite the ſtranger, ſave to contemplate its fallen ornaments; the worn-off traces of the chiſſel, and

the creeping ivy, lending a neſt to the bat and the ſwallow.

Such is the appearance of Tintern Abbey—

A ſilent chronicle of happier hours!

For a further hiſtorical account, ſee page 146 of the Welſh Tours.

We ſoon, from hence, approached the rocks on which Persfield is ſituated, late the ſeat and gardens of Valentine Morris, Eſq. We contrived to land here at high water, as the ouzy beach makes it not only inconvenient but very unpleaſant to wade through, when the tide is out. We climbed the aſcent by a regular, eaſy zig-zag, and with facility gained the ſummit.

When we had attained the top, we had a command (from the eminences of this ſituation, which ſurveys the Wye) of the grandeſt views

to

to be ſeen on the river—the interſection of rock and wood forming the ſegment of a circle which ſweeps in its ſemicircumference a baſe of two miles and upwards.

For the better effects of the views as well as the conveniency of landing, we were here at the period of the water flowing in and reaching the ſhores, as the river is ſtrongly tinged with the various ſoils over which it waſhes; and at the ebb the rich verdure of the banks is fringed with ſlopes of mud, which greatly reduce the impreſſions the mind would otherwiſe acquire.

Nature had been highly bountiful to this ſpot before Mr. Morris began his attempts at her improvement; and he had little elſe to do than make approaches to her beauties by forming walks and opening views, through the woods, to the va-

variegated objects which ſurround them.

Invention may here ardently buſy herſelf in forming fancied objects—now a citadel, now a promontory, now a bay, preſenting itſelf to the eye, and which the imagination may almoſt change at pleaſure for other ſubſtitutes. Rock upon rock appears to riſe in ſeries over each other; ſometimes the woods between, and ſometimes below them; and again the woods riſing above the rocks. Precipices, water-falls, and all the accumulation of grandeſt ſcenery ariſing one after the other, without confuſion, without diſorder—ever varied, and though a variety of the objects are often ſeen, ever new.

Can we poſſibly paſs over theſe enchanting grounds, and not lament that their once elegant and taſteful

proprietor is now no longer its owner? Judgment and ſkill appear diſplayed in the higheſt degree, in all that Mr. Morris has done; the faſtidious critic may carp, and ſuggeſt alterations; but the ſucceeding critic, carping and ſuggeſting again, will tell him—*ſuum cuique tribuere.*

Along the brow of the precipice, you catch the moſt romantic views, the compaſs of ſcenery being the richeſt in which the imagination could wiſh to buſy herſelf.

The walks are diſpoſed through woods and ſhrubberies on theſe bold and lofty parts, whoſe courſe follows the winding paſſage of the river for ſeveral miles, in all its meanderings, giving views of ſuch variety as dazzle with their faſcination.

The viciſſitude of proſpects is more rapid at Persfield than can be conceived, without being ſeen; at one

one point it is confined to a range of half a mile; advancing a few yards, you follow the Wye in all its ſerpentine windings, through a narrow but beautiful valley, to its junction with the vaſt waters of the Severn. Proceeding a little farther, the landſcape again becomes bounded as before, yet ſurpriſingly varied, and as delightfully attractive; alternately limited and extended, but ſo ſweetly varying, you ſcarce trace an affinity of reſemblance, and at the period you almoſt imagine yourſelf on fairy land.

At times we caught the oppoſite ſhore, lofty, bold, and ornamented with hanging woods, excluding the proſpect of the country behind; at other times, the eye falls on a craggy naked cliff, leſs elevated, and giving admiſſion to a wide range of view. At one ſpot the flatneſs of

the ſhore lets in the foreſt of Dean, the freſh verdure of whoſe meadows forms a beautiful contraſt to the romantic ſcenery with which the eye has previouſly been feaſted.

Approaching the end of the walks, from a perpendicular precipice, upwards of 300 feet high, is a ſcene that can be but faintly deſcribed; the ſoft tints of a beautifully variegated wood ſurpriſing you with a ſoothing tranquillity that makes you inſenſible of the eminence on which you are ſtanding. Still gradually aſcending, you come to a ſummit from whence all the objects which you have before ſeverally examined burſt at once on the ſight; their collective beauty adding luſtre to their ſeparate charms, and giving to the ſphere of viſion an entertainment which it could not conceive itſelf capable of enjoying. The hills of So-

merſetſhire, the Severn, Mount Denny Rock, in its middle, and the Briſtol Channel, come within the group; a combination which produces in this ſcene the moſt captivating effect.

Persfield has, in addition to theſe beauties, ſome moſt extraordinary echoes. My friend, producing a flute, raiſed ſome of the ſweeteſt ſounds which ever ſtruck my ear. The ſplaſhing of the water from the neighbouring fall had, at one of the ſpots where the echo is heard, a moſt ſingular effect.

The poſition called the *Lover's Leap* has rather a frightful precipice, rendered gloomy by its ſolitude of woods; but it gives you a charming command of the upper curves of the Wye; and from the ſuperior heights of Wynd Cliff a

ſcene of modeſt dignity crowns the whole.

We paſſed on the oppoſite ſide of the Wye, to ſee Lancot.

The traveller will here meet with ample recompence, in viewing the exquiſitely beautiful peninſula of Lancot, compriſing a circumference of about two miles; in approaching which, he will mark the ſoftened interruption to the grand and magnificent objects which are conſtantly preſenting themſelves to his eye, in his paſſage from Tintern —of the perpendicular and ſtupendous precipices, ſometimes naked and ſometimes clothed with the richeſt verdure,

Cedar and pine, and fir and branching palm,
A ſylvan ſcene! and as the ranks aſcend,
Shade above ſhade, a woody theatre
Of ſtatelieſt view. MILTON.

The

The Wye almoſt encircles this ſcene, in one or other part of which the ſurrounding mountains reflect their gloomy ſhades. Here, wandering about, the ſweet and modeſt violet attracts your notice: it recalled to my recollection the pure and delicate paſſion of Lorenzo de Medici, and one of the elegant ſonnets he addreſſed to the lady who afterwards became his wife. Mr. Roſcoe, in his tranſlation, has preſerved all the character and chaſtity of the original:

Not from the verdant garden's cultur'd bound,
That breathes of Pæſtum's aromatic gale,
We ſpring; but nurſlings of the lonely vale,
'Midſt woods obſcure, and native glooms were found;
'Midſt woods, and glooms, whoſe tangled brakes around
Once Venus ſorrowing trac'd, as all forlorn
She ſought Adonis, when a lurking thorn
Deep on her foot impreſs'd an impious wound.

Then prone to earth we bow'd our pallid flowers,
And caught the drops divine; the purple dyes
Tinging the luſtre of our native hue:
Nor ſummer gales, nor art-conducted ſhowers,
Have nurs'd our ſlender forms, but lovers' ſighs
Have been our gales, and lovers' tears our dew.

The ſucceſſive ſcenery from Monmouth to Lancot is peculiarly impreſſive. The jutting rock, and its dizzy height, the rich verdure of meadows, ſloping from the hills to the water's edge, dotted with flocks of ſheep hanging every where on its green ſteeps; on the undergrounds herds of cattle browſing in ſilent melancholy, ſome laving in the water, others retiring to ſheltered banks, to protect them from the worrying and tormenting fly: the tufted woods ſo cloſely ſet together, as to invite to meditation in looking on them: the rocks, here

and

and there ſtarting in continual ornament, with the ſteepy paths through which the cattle trace their courſe—Theſe are all objects which catch and detain involuntary attention, and rivet you almoſt to the ſpot.

With ſoft ſuſpended ſtep attention moves,
And ſilence hovers o'er the liſt'ning groves;
Orb within orb the charmed audience throng,
And the green vault reverberates the ſong.
DARWIN.

Here the ſoft diſtance melting from the eye,
Diſſolves its forms into the azure ſky. KNIGHT.

At a ſmall diſtance from hence is Chepſtow.

Chepſtow has much buſineſs of its own, and may be conſidered as the chief port of the Wye. Here a buſy multitude thronged the wharf, ſome in purſuit of buſineſs, others of pleaſure.

In this life, in order to obtain *happineſs*, the mind muſt have occupation, be it pleaſure, curioſity, or emolument. Ceaſing to have employment, languor takes place of good-humour and ſociability, and we often fall unhappy victims to our own perverſeneſs.

The caſtle is ſituated on an elevated perpendicular rock, which gradually diminiſhes, till it ſinks into the level of the Wye. The wooden bridge, with a ſtone pier in the centre (probably ever ſince Leland's time), produces, at low water, an effect rather terrific; which may be readily conceived from its neceſſary height, the tide oftentimes riſing ſixty feet, and flowing in with great rapidity.

When we recollected that the area or ſite of this once magnificent caſtle had occupied five acres of ground,

the

the mind naturally reverted to the baronial grandeur which with the times of chivalry prevailed within its walls; the circumſtance of its period of erection being unknown, by no means ſuppreſſing ſuch ſenſations. It was of conſiderable importance, ſo late as with the laſt efforts of Charles the Firſt, when Thomas Morgan demanded its ſurrender to Sir Thomas Fairfax.

The Stinchcombe Quarter, as Morgan called it, or the menace of retaliation, appears to have forcibly operated on Fitzmorris, the governor. Prince Rupert had put the men of Stinchcombe to the ſword. Fitzmorris, though he ſent a gallant refuſal, knew not how to make a gallant defence; for he ſurrendered in four days after, without any reſiſtance deſerving of notice.

Three years afterwards, Sir Ni-

cholas Kemis, with a ſpirit worthy the cauſe he eſpouſed, ſurpriſed the port in the night, and obtained its poſſeſſion. Cromwell marched againſt it in perſon, hoping to take it by ſtorm; but, unſucceſsful in his attempt, he was compelled to leave it to the ſlow progreſs of a ſiege; when the garriſon and Kemis, with 160 men, gallantly defended themſelves till their proviſions were exhauſted. Kemis and forty of his men were killed in the ſiege. This was the laſt place which held out againſt the Parliament forces. In this caſtle, Henry Martin, the regicide, died a priſoner.

Chepſtow gives to the Duke of Beaufort one of his titles.

The diviſion of the two counties of Monmouth and Glouceſter is in the centre of Chepſtow bridge.

After

After journeying amid a pleaſing ſucceſſion of beauties, that had often held attention captive, we took up our reſidence, for ſeveral days, at the agreeable town of Chepſtow, near which the Wye mingles with the vaſt waters of the Severn, and becomes one kindred ſtream.

A farther account of Chepſtow will be found in page 143 of the Welſh Tours.

OB-

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MANNERS and CHARACTER

OF THE

WELSH,

&c.

THE paths of education that lead to refinement of manners are now become generally extended through every diviſion of our iſland. Hence it appears, that from the introduction of Engliſh ſchools into the principality of Wales, the natives have gradually become more

and

and more courteous, and, in many inſtances, diſcover no inferiority as to mental endowments or cultivated manners with their neighbours the Engliſh.

As it hitherto has been the lot of a great portion of mankind to be deprived of ſuch advantages, it may, in every ſtate and nation, account for the very gradual progreſs in civilized manners, and the prejudices ever attendant on ignorance: it ſhould therefore always be the practice of every one who may either travel for pleaſure or uſeful inquiry, to make thoſe allowances for the cuſtoms and manners of a people which in the nature of things is reaſonably their due.

Where the mind has long been left deſtitute of culture, it will account for a belief ſo generally retained in ſpells,

ſpells, omens, witches, ghoſts, &c. throughout Wales; nor is ſimilar credulity by any means uncommon in many parts of our own country, even at this day, as may abundantly be ſeen in Mr. Brand's Popular Antiquities.

The ſingular ſociability of the Welſh character is indiſputable; their attachment to the *harp* is well known, and an unrivalled eagerneſs for the *dance*. The latter amuſement we were informed prevails even on the *ſabbath*, after the ſervice of the church is over.

A temper naturally haſty, a high national ſpirit, and a hardy temperament of frame, are ſtriking traits in the character of Cambrians.—From a ſingle diſagreement in a convivial party, we have known the whole room become one ſcene of confuſion; each has challenged his fel-

fellow, and a battle royal has enſued. But the Welſh do not cheriſh reſentment. In a few minutes the dance has ſucceeded, and general harmony been reſtored.

Such are the ſons of Cambria's ancient race,
A race that check'd victorious Cæſar, aw'd
Imperial Rome, and forc'd mankind to own
Superior virtues Britons only knew,
Or only practis'd; for they nobly dar'd
To face oppreſſion, and where Freedom finds
Her aid invok'd, there will the goddeſs fly.

ROLT.

"Hoſpitality," ſays a late ingenious touriſt, "that affection which "may take root in every nation, "but which retreats in general from "the ſeats of opulence and luxury, "is peculiarly adapted to the diſpo- "ſition of the Welſh; and where- "ever an opportunity has occurred, "I have often witneſſed its faſcinat- "ing influence. This ever-bloom- "ing flower frequently adorns thoſe

"rugged

" rugged tracks which ſeem almoſt
" impervious to the haunts of men;
" in the moſt dreary wilds it charms
" the wearied ſenſes of the travel-
" ler, and it flouriſhes eminently in
" the remoteſt vallies of Cam-
" bria."

Wales, with regard to its natural wildneſs and romantic beauty, for fertile vales and towering mountains, may fairly vie with any other country; whilſt her grateful rivers, ever varying as they flow, preſent a countleſs ſucceſſion of beauties.—The meandering *Dee*, with *Conway* and the *Dovey*, in North Wales, are no inconſiderable rivals to the *Towey*, the *Wye*, and the *Uſk*, in the ſouth. The majeſtic beauties of the *Rhydol* and the *Tivy* may challenge competition with the *Mawdoe* or the *Clydd*.

The

The heights of the mountains in the north have certainly the pre-eminence over the ſouth. Snowdon and Cader Idris will ever ſtand as monuments of ſome great convulſions of nature, and remain a ſtupendous ſpectacle, to awe and ſurpriſe the traveller.

In the ſouth, cultivation takes the lead of the north, as well as in population; though the difference in the number of the towns and villages is not very great. Thoſe of North Wales have, within theſe few years, been greatly improved, from their free intercourſe with Ireland; and the roads in every part are wonderfully improved.

Comparing the beauty of the vales together in the two diſtricts, the ſuperiority muſt be given to the north, ſo long as Clydd and Feſtiniog remain.

On

On the ſuperior dignity of their caſtles and abbeys it is hard to decide. Ragland, Tintern, Llantony, and the fragments of Caerphily, are all objects of proud diſtinction: nevertheleſs, when we behold the pictureſque and ſoaring towers of Caernarvon, Harlech, and Conway, with the ſober but venerable Valle Crucis Abbey, our preference becomes ſuſpended, and we ſcarcely know to which the palm ſhould be aſſigned, or from which we have received the greateſt portion of ſurpriſe and delight:—

While ſtray'd our eyes o'er Towy's flood,
Over mead, and over wood,
From hill to dale, from dale to hill,
And Contemplation had her fill.
Ever charming, ever new,
The varied landſcape charms the view,
The cataract's fall, the river's flow,
The woody vallies, warm and low;
The windy ſummit, wild and high,
Roughly ruſhing on the ſky;

The

The pleaſant ſeat, the ruin'd tower,
The naked rock, the ſhady bower;
Each gives each a double charm,
Like pearls upon an Ethiop's arm.
Thus is Nature's veſture wrought,
To inſtruct our wand'ring thought;
Thus ſhe dreſſes green and gay,
To diſperſe our cares away. DYER.

CURI-

CURIOUS PARTICULARS

RELATIVE TO

WALES.

PLINY, in his Natural Hiſtory, ſays, that a ſmall time after the Romans had carried their arms through the iſland, they began to apply themſelves to working the mines: at firſt the lead ore was got with eaſe, as it lay near the ſurface. In Pliny's time, who died A. D. 79, there was a law, limiting the annual produce, as even now, with regard to black lead. The extraordinary diſcoveries that have been made at different periods appear, from

from the teſtimony of ancient hiſtorians, to be founded more in chance or accident than any particular gift of genius.

Juſtin tells us, that the gold-mines of *Galicia* were diſcovered by the plough; and Strabo aſſerts, that thoſe of *India* owed their diſcovery to piſmires, who, by their common induſtry, raiſed the earth into a hillock. Trivial accidents have been the effect of vaſt mineral diſcoveries. The great mine at Halkin, belonging to Earl Groſvenor, was diſcovered by ditching; whilſt that at Llangynnog firſt obtained notice by the ſtep of a woman aſcending a hill, and baring the vein with her feet.

The ancient method of mining, in many reſpects, agrees with the preſent. The perſons ſo employed worked by turns, alternately relieving

ing each other. They worked night and day, by the aid of lamps, and drove levels and ſunk ſhafts, propping the ground as they advanced. When the ore was got, it was cleanſed, according to the method now uſed, and ſmelted in a furnace; and afterwards caſt into forms ſomewhat reſembling the common pigs of lead.

We are told by Mr. Pennant, that the Britiſh name of lead is loſt: that we now uſe is derived from the Saxon. Borlaſe obſerves, as ſoon as the Romans had made a conqueſt of the country, they formed in the tin province, camps and roads, ſtill viſible, and left behind them vaſes, urns, and money; that evince them to have been a ſtationary people in the iſland.

Pliny likewiſe adds, that the Romans made mirrors of tin, and

lined

lined the veſſels of braſs with it, to prevent any deadly effect.

Strabo, in lib. 4, obſerves, that gold and ſilver were enumerated among the products of Great Britain. The Romans were apprized of this; and with our other valuable metals it no doubt proved an incentive to their ambition to effect the conqueſt.

Agricola, previous to the battle of *Gampian* mountain, in his oration to his ſoldiers, excited them to victory, by reminding them of the riches that would await the reward of valour.

In the reigns of James IV. and V. great wealth was produced in the *lead hills*, from the gold collected from the ſand waſhed from the mountain; and in the reign of the latter it produced not leſs than 300*l.*

ſterling, at this period no inconſiderable ſum.

The art of coining was no doubt in uſe previous to the arrival of the Romans; witneſs the gold ſickles of the Druids, and the coins found in Cornwall. Different ſorts of metal were uſed, but chiefly gold, being the eaſieſt fuſed, and moſt ſuſceptible of an impreſſion.

Dr. Borlaſe has preſerved a ſeries of theſe rude but valuable coins.—Previous to the Romans having attempted to form a face or impreſſion on their coins, the firſt we know of which was inſcribed, is that of *Caſſivelaunus*, cotemporary with Cæſar. As ſoon as an intercourſe took place between the Britons and the Romans, they began to imitate them, by putting letters on their coins; but no ſooner was their

con-

conqueſt effected than their coin was ſuppreſſed.

Coals were a uſeful article, well known to the ancient Britons before the arrival of the Romans, who had not even a name for them.—Their uſe, agreeable to Theophraſtus, was common three centuries before Cæſar, to the workers of braſs. The vaſt coal-pits in the neighbourhood of Flint, Northop, and Mold, have been noticed in page 139 of the Welſh Tours.

Mr. Ray informs us, that in Flintſhire there is a certain vegetable, rare in other places, which here grows in plenty on the mountains, and in May makes a pretty appearance, with its white flowers. However ſingular it may appear, it is not noticed by the celebrated botaniſt Linnæus.

The *drinking horn*, ſo famed in Welſh ſtory, is a large bugle, or horn of an ox, enriched with ſculptured ſilver, and with a chain of the ſame metal. There were three ſpecies of them uſed in the royal court, and each was to be worth a pound.—See Leges Wallicæ.

To drink out of the royal cup at great entertainments was only a privilege of the officers of the palace. On all feſtive days, the horn was emptied at one tip, and then blown, to ſhow there was not any deceit.

The jovial horn was a ſubject of much wit and poetry in thoſe days.

The bard *Owen Cyveiliog* has celebrated it in a poem compoſed immediately after a great victory over the Engliſh in Maelor.

To ſhow the ſpirit of *Welſh poetry* at ſo early a period, a few of the firſt ſtanzas, &c. are offered to the reader's notice: the tranſlation was given by a perſon of conſiderable poetic talents.

On the Drinking Horn.

I.

Uproſe the ruddy dawn of day,
The armies met in dread array
On *Maelor Dreſred*'s field;
Loud the Britiſh clarions ſound,
The Saxons, gaſping on the ground,
The bloody conteſt yield.

II.

By Owen's arm the valiant bled,
From Owen's arm the coward fled
Aghaſt with wild affright;
Let then their haughty lords beware
How Owen's juſt revenge they dare,
And tremble at his ſight.

III.

Fill the *Hirlas horn*, my boy,
Nor let the tuneful lips be dry

That warble Owen's praiſe;
Whoſe walls with warlike ſpoils are hung,
And open wide his gates are flung
In Cambria's peaceful days.

IV.

This hour we dedicate to joy;
Then fill the *Hirlas horn*, my boy,
That ſhineth like the ſea;
Whoſe azure handles, tipp'd with gold,
Invite the graſp of Britons bold,
The ſons of Liberty.

V.

Fill it higher ſtill, and higher,
Mead with nobleſt deeds inſpire;
Now the battle's loſt and won,
Give the horn to *Gronwy*'s ſon;
Put it into *Gwgan's* hand,
Bulwark of his native land,
Guardian of *Sabrina*'s flood,
Who oft has dy'd his ſpear in blood:
When they hear their chieftain's voice,
Then his gallant friends rejoice;
But when to fight he goes no more,
The feſtal ſhout reſounds on *Severn*'s winding
ſhore.

VI.

Fill the horn with foaming liquor,
Fill it up, my boy, be quicker.

Hence,

Hence, away, deſpair and ſorrow;
Time enough to ſigh to-morrow:
Let the brimming goblet ſmile,
And *Edryfed*'s cares beguile.
Gallant youth, unus'd to fear,
Maſter of the broken ſpear,
And the harrow-pierced ſhield,
Brought with honour from the field.
Hadſt thou ſeen, in *Maelor* fight,
How we put the foe to flight;
Hadſt thou ſeen the chiefs in arms,
When the foe ruſh'd on in ſwarms;
Round about their prince they ſtood,
And ſtain'd their ſwords with hoſtile blood;
Glorious bulwarks to their praiſe,
Their prince devotes his lateſt days.
Now, my boy, thy taſk is o'er,
Thou ſhalt fill the horn no more.
Long may the King of kings protect
And crown with bliſs my friends elect;
Where Liberty and Truth reſide,
And Virtue, Truth's immortal bride,
There may we all together meet,
And former times renew in heavenly converſe ſweet.

It may be ſome matter of curioſity to notice the celebrated heroine *Ethelfleda*, ſo frequently men-

mentioned in the Mercian hiſtory. She flouriſhed A. D. 907, and was the undegenerate daughter of the great *Alfred*, and the wife of Ethelred Earl of Mercia, under his brother-in-law Edward King of England.—On the birth of her firſt child, ſhe ſeparated from her huſband, and devoted herſelf to deeds of arms. She lived upon the beſt terms with him, and they both united in all acts of piety and munificence, reſtored cities, founded abbeys, &c.

After the death of her huſband, A. D. 912, ſhe aſſumed the government of the Mercian earldom, and, like an Amazon of old, took the command of the army. She became ſo celebrated for her valour, that ſhe had the dignified names of lord and king given her.

She

She built no leſs than nine caſtles; ſhe took Brecknock, made its queen priſoner, and ſtormed Derby.

After a glorious courſe, ſhe died at Tamworth, 922.—Her loſs was much regretted by the whole kingdom.

We find left on record the following lines to her memory:

Elfleda, terror of mankind,
Nature, for ever unconfin'd,
Stampt thee in woman's tender frame,
Though worthy of a hero's name:
Thee, thee alone, the muſe ſhall ſing,
Dread empreſs and victorious king;
E'en Cæſar's conqueſts were outdone
By thee, illuſtrious Amazon.

Wales continued the refuge of the ancient Britons, when the Saxons had driven them out of England; and there they preſerved the ancient blood royal of their kings, their

their laws and ancient language, from the fury of their cruel enemy.

There always continued an implacable hatred between the two nations; and though Egbert, king of the Weſt Saxons, reduced the heptarchy to a monarchy, yet he and his ſucceſſors received no obedience from the kings or princes of Wales; but they held their own native mountains and vallies as abſolute monarchs.

Here Cadwallader, the laſt king of Britain, and his deſcendants, governed the people as their lawful kings and princes, during the whole time of the Saxon government.

When William the Conqueror ſubdued England, he diſpoſſeſſed the Saxon iſſue of the crown, and brought in the Normans. When he had obtained quiet poſſeſſion of the king-

kingdom, the Welſh took no notice of his conqueſt over the Saxons, but conſidered it as a ſtruggle between two nations.

Roderick the Great, who poſſeſſed all *Wales*, divided it between his three ſons, long before the conqueſt: one governed the north, another the ſouth, and the third Powys. Theſe three princes would never acknowledge the Conqueror had any ſuperiority over Wales; from whence cruel and bloody wars enſued, and they made daily incurſions on each other.

The lords, at the conqueſt of the country, built caſtles for themſelves and towns for their followers, in the moſt fertile parts. This accounts for the numerous caſtles in Wales, as may be ſeen in the ancient charters. There were towns before the con-

conqueſt. They held their lordſhips of the kings of England in chief, and they were bound to keep their caſtles with ſufficient men for the keeping the enemies of the king in ſubjection.

The government by lords marchers continued in Wales till Henry the Eighth, from which period the Welſh have been governed by the laws of England.

FINIS.

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